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SCHOOL LUNCH IS BIG BUSINESS

United States Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service. • FNS 263

School Lunch Is Big Business

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National School Lunch Program (NSLP) provides nutritious lunches to schoolchildren across the Nation. During 1988:

- over 90,000 schools participated in the program
- over 4 billion lunches were served, including:
  1,651,511,490 free lunches
  801,637 reduced-price lunches
- over $3.6 billion in cash and commodities was provided to schools

School Lunch Helps Reduce School Operating Costs

Over 30 percent of education payments to schools come from programs supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The School Lunch Program means purchasing power that benefits your school district and pays a substantial share of school operating costs.

Inaccurate Claims Cost Districts Money

Inaccurate meal claims have a negative fiscal impact on school districts because Federal dollars can be recovered for improperly claimed meals.

School districts can avoid claiming meals in error by:

- properly approving and verifying free and reduced-price applications

- using accurate recordkeeping, counting, and claiming procedures

- claiming only reimbursable meals served to eligible children

Accountability is EVERYONE'S business.

School Officials Can Make a Difference

By helping the program run the way it should—accurately and accountably—school officials can ensure that schools get the reimbursement they've earned and that the Government pays only for meals actually served.

Good communication and cooperation between school personnel and food service staff can help prevent errors in meal claims.

School office personnel can improve meal accountability by keeping accurate records and notifying food service staff of:

- any changes in the number and eligibility of students who will be eating school meals
- the names of students who have withdrawn from school and are no longer eligible to receive school lunches
- the eligibility status of newly enrolled students

Food service staff can help by accurately observing proper procedures while moving students through the lunch lines quickly and efficiently.

Communication and Cooperation — The Key to a Successful Lunch

Your food service staff need to know that YOU support this program. They need to know you're right there—to work with them, discuss problems, and refine procedures. Each of us has a responsibility in the School Lunch Program to provide better service to the Nation's children and full value to taxpayers who subsidize nutritious lunches. We must all work together ... because meal counts count!

The National School Lunch Program is an equal opportunity program. If you believe you or anyone has been discriminated against because of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or handicap, write immediately to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250.

For further information and guidance, see the following:

- NSLP regulations—7 CFR Part 210
- "Meal Accountability—It's Everybody's Business" video
- AccuClaim: "Meal Counts Count" video
- State/FNS guidance publications on AccuClaim

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